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STATES-ITEM

OF PROGRESS

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RIE DEATH 2, 3 DAYS

Toxicology Report to Shed Light

A toxicological report apparently held the key today to whether David William Ferrie committed suicide, was slain or died a natural death.

Police sources said it might be two or three days before the tests are completed and a report determining the exact cause of death is ready.

Ferrie, found dead shortly before noon yesterday in his apartment at 3330 Louisiana Ave. Pkwy. was described by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison as a key figure in his investigation of the slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

ORLEANS PARISH Coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta said anatomical findings showed

(Related stories on Pages 6 and 13.)

that Ferrie suffered a rupture of a blood vessel at the base of the brain, which caused a hemorrhage.

Garrison appeared convinced the death was a suicide. A cryptic note was found at the scene.

The only stipulation the DA made was that no cameras would be allowed in the room in order to "keep it from turning into a circus."

"I can't pose for a photograph when a man has committed suicide," he added. "I'm just not that callous."

Garrison disclosed that members of his staff have been maintaining a nightly stakeout on Ferrie's apartment "for a long period," beginning each evening and ending when Ferrie went to bed. Last night's stakeout, he said, ended at 11, when all the lights in the apartment went out.

HOWEVER, WASHINGTON

Post newsman George Lardner, here to cover Garrison's investigation, said he went to Ferrie's residence about midnight to interview him and remained until about 4 a. m.

The reporter said Ferrie appeared to be neither excessively excited nor depressed, and there was no indication that he might be contemplating suicide.

Dr. Chetta said rigor mortis had set in and the time of Ferrie's death had to be before 4 a. m. Lardner, however, insisted that he had visited with Ferrie until that hour.

GARRISON SAID this time element represents a major inconsistency in the case, and "is one of the mysteries we don't understand."

The stakeout on Ferrie's home, he added, had been "for the purpose of gathering information."

Concerning the circumstances surrounding Ferrie's death, Garrison seemed convinced the death was a suicide.

From the stakeout and from other sources of informa-

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tion, Garrison stated, "we noticed he was becoming increasingly nervous. He became unable to go to the airport (where Ferrie was a flying instructor) on a regular basis, and he was constantly calling members of our staff concerning the progress of the case..."

THESE AND OTHER observations, said the district attorney, "had caused us to become increasingly concerned, as our investigation progressed, about the possibility of his killing himself."

Garrison said that Ferrie had made "comments to individuals in the last week or two—an individual—about the possibility of killing himself." Later in the press conference he clarified this by saying Ferrie had "indicated it to someone we had working on the case."

A Washington, D. C., phy-

sician said it would have been impossible for Ferrie to write the note and then walk back to his bedroom after the blood vessel burst.

Yet it is still unexplained how Ferrie could have known the hemorrhage would occur,

unless he took drugs to induce it.

ANOTHER FIGURE in Garrison's investigation of the Kennedy assassination was in hiding after saying he feared for his life. But a third probe figure, being held in Parish Prison, has still asked for no increased security and is getting none.

David Lewis, who said his knowledge of the Kennedy case put his life in danger, today was reported to have left New Orleans with his family for an undisclosed location.

Lewis a 26-year-old baggage clerk, formerly was a private detective. In that role he claimed to have met New Orleans-born Lee Harvey Oswald, named by the Warren Commission as the Kennedy assassin.

LEWIS, HIS wife and their four children were away from home last night, and neighbors said they had no idea of the family's whereabouts. Employees at the bus station said:

"We don't know where he is and don't know when he will be back — and that's official."

On the other hand, Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd Jr. said he has no plans to increase security for Miguel Torres, a Cuban prisoner reportedly here for questioning about the JFK plot.

Torres, serving a nine-year sentence at Louisiana State Penitentiary, is now locked up at Parish Prison.

Heyd said Torres had asked for no special security and and DA's office had not asked that any be provided. Torres is being held in a regular tier with other prisoners.

GARRISON SAID yesterday his office was on the verge of arresting Ferrie for involve-

ment in a plot to kill Kennedy, when Ferrie was found dead in his uptown apartment.

Garrison said the decision to move in on Ferrie was made yesterday morning, shortly before Ferrie's nude body was found lying near 15 empty and half-empty medicine bottles.

The district attorney said that "in a meeting in my house this morning, we had reached a decision to arrest him (Ferrie) early next week. Apparently we waited too long."

AS LATE AS Monday, Garrison had stated that, due to premature publicity, no arrests would be made for a period of months in his investigation into a supposed plot to assassinate Kennedy.

In an hour-and-a-half-long press conference at his office yesterday, Garrison unloaded the first real information he has given out since the States-Item disclosed his investigation last Friday. Previously, Garrison had not publicly mentioned Ferrie's name in connection with the investigation and had only spoken of the investigation itself in roundabout terms.

At about 4:30 p.m. yesterday, however, the DA tossed out his first bombshell of the day by beginning:

"The apparent suicide of David Ferrie ends the life of a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals. Evidence developed by our office had long since confirmed that he was involved in events culminating in the assassination of President Kennedy."

Garrison added that he has had "for some time enough evidence to make an arrest."

The district attorney spoke only in generalities of Ferrie's association with a supposed plot to kill the President, but at one point he said, "I have no reason to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald killed anybody in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963 (the date of the assassination)."

The 6-foot-6 lawman holed up in his inner office for most of the afternoon with his staff.

WHEN THE conference finally began at 4:30, more than 20 newsmen were led into the office, single file, to

face a tired but still energetic-looking Garrison. He answered all questions put to him by the horde of reporters during the session, occasionally punctuating his more positive remarks with a terse "no comment."

Garrison, who repeatedly referred to Ferrie as "an extremely intelligent man," said that the men conducting the stakeout had reported other signs of a mental breakdown on Ferrie's part, such as "increased endless pacing of the floor."

THE NIGHT before his death, the DA recounted, the doomed man spent the entire evening sitting in a chair staring at the front door.

Garrison said he was not ruling out the possibility of murder in the Ferrie case, but "for these reasons and for other reasons we can't go into now, we are assuming it is a suicide."

Ferrie, who would have been 49 on March 28, was born and reared in Cleveland, Ohio. He came south in the early 50s, living first in Miami briefly, then coming to New Orleans, according to the district attorney's records. Garrison identified him as a former pilot for Eastern Air Lines and said he was "known as a remarkably competent pilot."

FERRIE WAS KNOWN here as a flying instructor and a private investigator, but the city directory lists him as a psychologist. He has an arrest record dating back several years, in both Orleans and Jefferson parishes, primarily on morals charges.

Ferrie called The States-Item last Friday night after the story broke and talked to reporter David Snyder. He told Snyder that the district attorney had become interested in him in connection with the assassination investigation.

"Supposedly," Ferrie said, "I have been pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy."

YESTERDAY, HOWEVER, Garrison said that an airplane did not figure in Ferrie's connection with the supposed assassination plot. Ferrie, he said, did not fly to South Texas, but drove there the night

of the assassination with two companions.

Ferrie himself had explained this to the States-Item on Saturday, after earlier reports had said he made the trip by plane.

"The weather at that time between here and Houston and Galveston was so bad that it was impossible to fly," said Garrison.

HE ADDED that the Texas trip had triggered the investigation into Ferrie's affairs. "We felt it was rather peculiar," said the DA, "that a man would suddenly take a trip to South Texas on the evening of the assassination, when everybody else in the country was home watching television."

Garrison stressed that there was no question as to whether Ferrie had been directly involved in the shooting of Kennedy.

"Mr. Ferrie was not in Dallas at the time of the assassination. We have known that for years and that is not the point." What the real point of the Ferrie investigation was, Garrison declined to say. He did reveal that the other two persons on the Texas trip are not suspects.

RELATING THE series of events leading to Ferrie's initial arrest in connection with the assassination, Garrison said that a check of files and other information sources immediately after the fatal shooting turned up Ferrie's name, along with others.

When it was discovered that Ferrie had left town for Houston, he said, an all-night stakeout was placed on Ferrie's apartment "about midnight, Sunday, Nov. 24."

A reporter pointed out that

this was the same day that Jack Ruby shot and killed Oswald in Dallas. Asked whether the two incidents were in any way connected, Garrison said, "No comment."

Garrison stated that Ferrie showed up at his apartment some time after midnight Monday morning, was arrested for questioning later that morning and subsequently turned over to the FBI for questioning.

THE DISTRICT attorney

said his men found 40 pages of material concerning Ferrie included in the FBI report on the assassination in the National Archives in Washington. However, he said, 36 of these pages were marked "Top Secret" and were unavailable to his investigators.

He said that the 26-volume report of the Warren Commission on the assassination mentions Ferrie only once in passing, and then misspelled his name.

Garrison would not say whether Ferrie's death had materially obstructed the progress of his investigation, but he did say that he was still confident "beyond a shadow of a doubt" that the investigation would eventually be drawn to a successful conclusion.

"WE'VE ALREADY gone far beyond the point that the Warren Commission ended at," Garrison asserted. He blamed the commission and the FBI for accumulating "mountains and mountains of evidence," but not evaluating it thoroughly.

"This is a problem of analysis and evaluation," he said. "We don't need more fact gathering, we need more evaluators."

Garrison stressed that "I intend to maintain control" of the investigation, and not hand over the reins to a federal agency that might "cause things to delay and bog down."



DAVID FERRIE'S APARTMENT at 3330 Louisiana ave. pkwy., where the flying instructor-private investigator was found dead yesterday.